details of rural electrification projects received from the States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for financial assistance from REC during the last two years are as under:

	1994-95		1995-96	
	U.P.	Bihar	U.P.	Bihar
No. of projects received	82	NIL	14	69
Loan assistance asked for (Rupees in crores)	126.19	NIL	24.32	96.85

(b) REC has sanctioned 81 projects for financial assistance of Rs. 124.46 crores in 1994-95 and 7 projects for assistance of Rs. 12.44 crores in 1995-96 to UPSEB. While no project was received for financial assistance from BSEB in 1994-95, 69 projects submitted by it during 1995-96 could not be sanctioned by REC considering the available coverage under the already sanctioned ongoing REC schemes and their inability to liquidate REC's dues.

Rural Electrification is a continous process. The remaining projects will be considered for sanction by REC depending upon the performance of the concerned SEBs/State Governments in liquidation of REC dues, available coverage under the ongoing RE schemes, preparedness of the State to take up the programme and other inputs.

Impact of Militancy on Oil Exploration in Tripura

2081. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the growing militancy in Tripura has affected exploration activities of the ONGC to a large extent;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps, Government propose to take to boost oil exploration in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The militant activities of various extremist groups such as All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), Tribal Liberation Organisation (TLO) etc., have severely hit the operations of ONGC Ltd., in their Tripura Project.

(c) With a view to boost the exploration for oil and gas in Tripura, a Block measuring 3,000 Sq. Kms., (AA-ON-3) has been awarded to a private/ multinational Company. Also, ONGC Ltd. has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNOCAL of USA to jointly explore and exploit the PEL areas of ONGC.

Reduction of Customs and Excise duties on Petroleum

2082. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal was made to reduce costoms and excise duties on petroleum and diesel products;

(b) whether it is a fact that the customer pays high prices for oil products due to high excise and customs duties.

(c) whether Government have made any efforts to plead for reduction of such imports; and

(d) the steps proposed to eliminate taxing products at source of petroleum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and shall be laid on the table of the House.